

Mayo River State Park Public Comment Meeting

March 12, 2026





Housekeeping

- All phone/ mics on mute
- Turn cameras off
- Please type questions and comments into the chat bar.
- Questions will be answered at the end of the presentation.
- The slide show will be posted on the projects master plan website after the meeting.
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/mr-masterplan>
- Additional comments will be received until April 12, 2026
- Links to contact information and websites will be given at the end of the presentation



Agenda

6pm – 8pm

- Hello and welcome
- Meeting purpose
- Recap of process
- Park background
- Visitor experience
- Purpose Statement and Goals & Obj.
- Phased development conceptual master plan
- Next steps and Wrap-up

Welcome to Mayo River State Park



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

District 1 - Tidewater

- BI** - Belle Isle State Park
- CP** - Chippokes State Park
- FC** - False Cape State Park
- FL** - First Landing State Park
- KP** - Kiptopeke State Park
- MA** - Machicomoco State Park
- YR** - York River State Park

District 2 - Potomac

- CA** - Caledon State Park
- CB** - Culpeper Battlefields Historical State Park
- LA** - Lake Anna State Park
- LE** - Leesylvania State Park
- MN** - Mason Neck State Park
- SN** - Sweet Run State Park
- WE** - Westmoreland State Park
- WW** - Widewater State Park

* under development

District 3 - Shenandoah

- DO** - Douthat State Park
- HF*** - Hayfields State Park
- JR** - James River State Park
- NB** - Natural Bridge State Park
- SE** - Seven Bends State Park
- SH** - Shenandoah River State Park
- SK** - Sky Meadows State Park

District 4 - Central

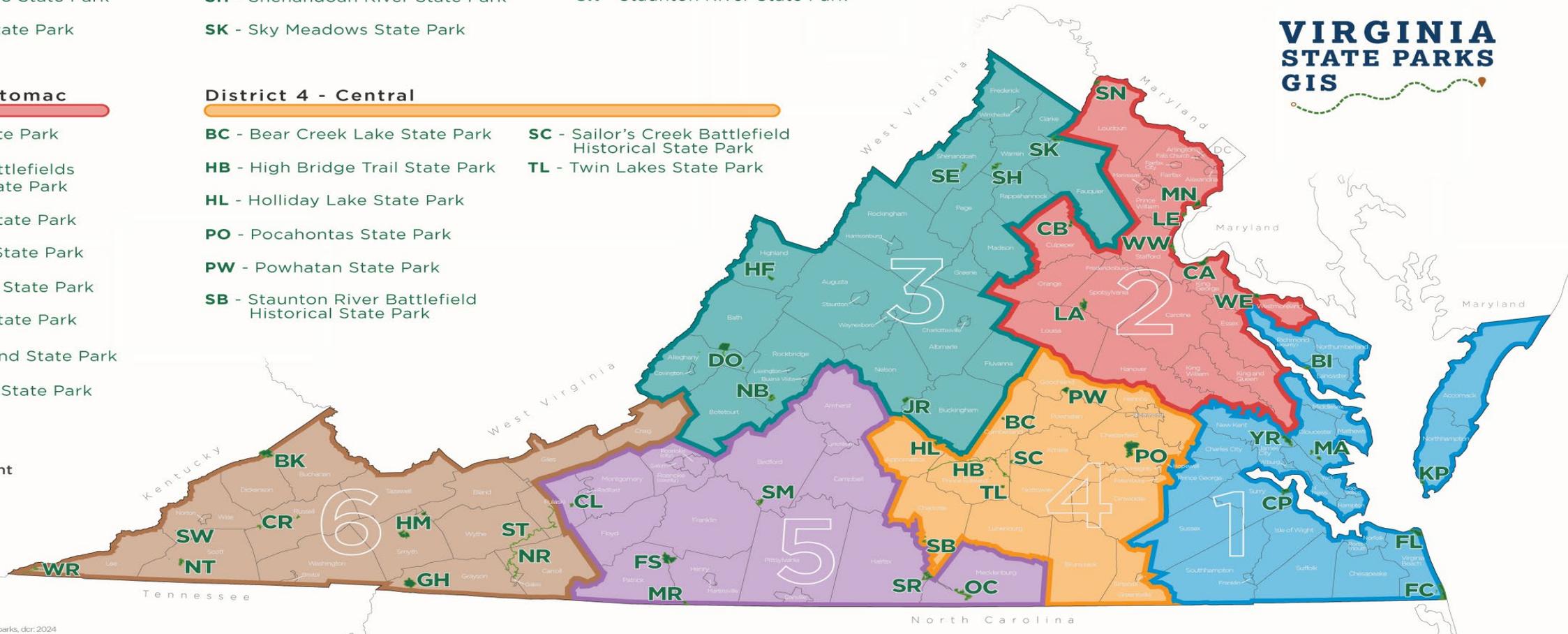
- BC** - Bear Creek Lake State Park
- HB** - High Bridge Trail State Park
- HL** - Holliday Lake State Park
- PO** - Pocahontas State Park
- PW** - Powhatan State Park
- SB** - Staunton River Battlefield Historical State Park
- SC** - Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park
- TL** - Twin Lakes State Park

District 5 - Piedmont

- CL** - Claytor Lake State Park
- FS** - Fairy Stone State Park
- MR*** - Mayo River State Park
- OC** - Oconeechee State Park
- SM** - Smith Mountain Lake State Park
- SR** - Staunton River State Park

District 6 - Southwest

- BK** - Breaks Interstate Park
- CR** - Clinch River State Park
- GH** - Grayson Highlands State Park
- HM** - Hungry Mother State Park
- NR** - New River Trail State Park
- NT** - Natural Tunnel State Park
- ST** - Shot Tower Historical State Park
- SW** - Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park
- WR** - Wilderness Road State Park



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS GIS

Meeting Purpose

In conformance with State Park Master Plan requirements, the purpose of this meeting is to:

- share project progress goals and objectives
- summarize and report on previous input
- Present key elements of the overall park master plan including the proposed site amenities, visitor experience areas, and phased development plan
- give the attendees an opportunity for comment



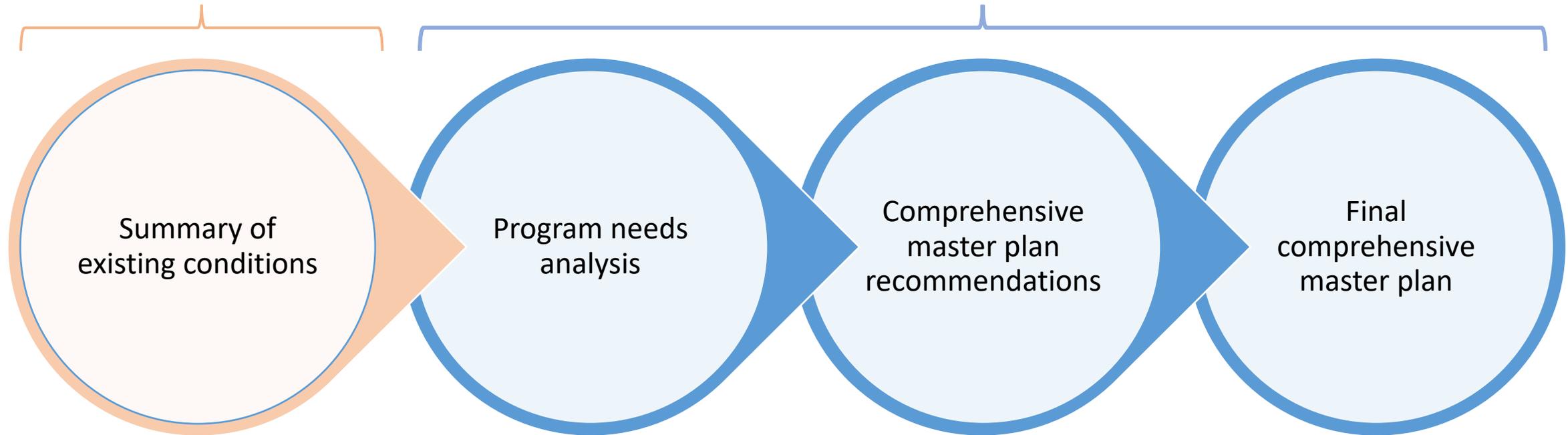
Project Progress



Master Plan Steps

Stage 1 - Conservation

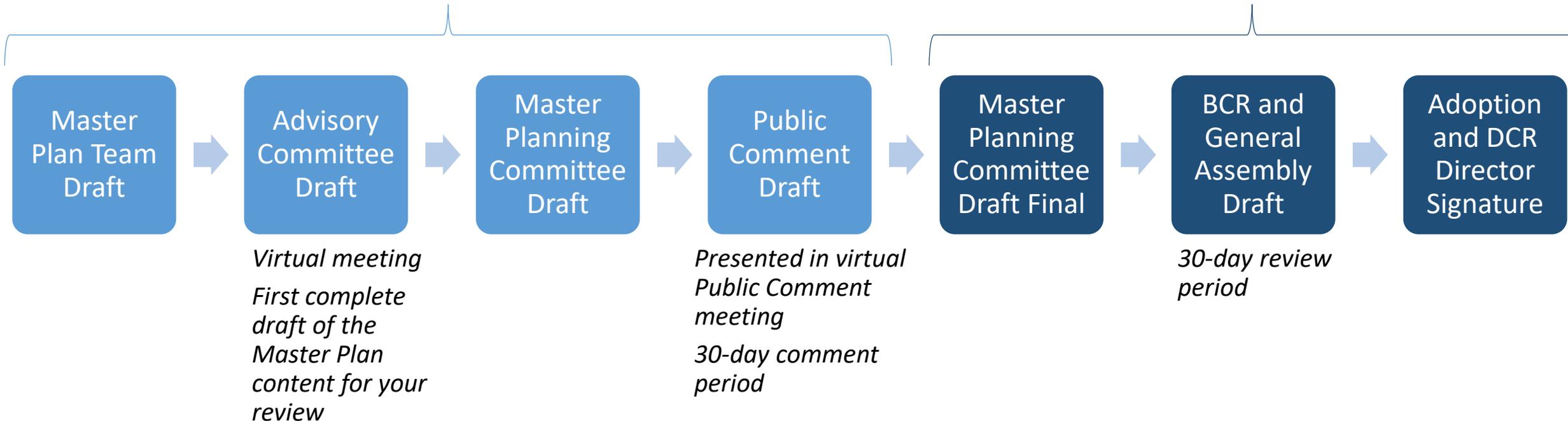
Stage 2 - Recreation



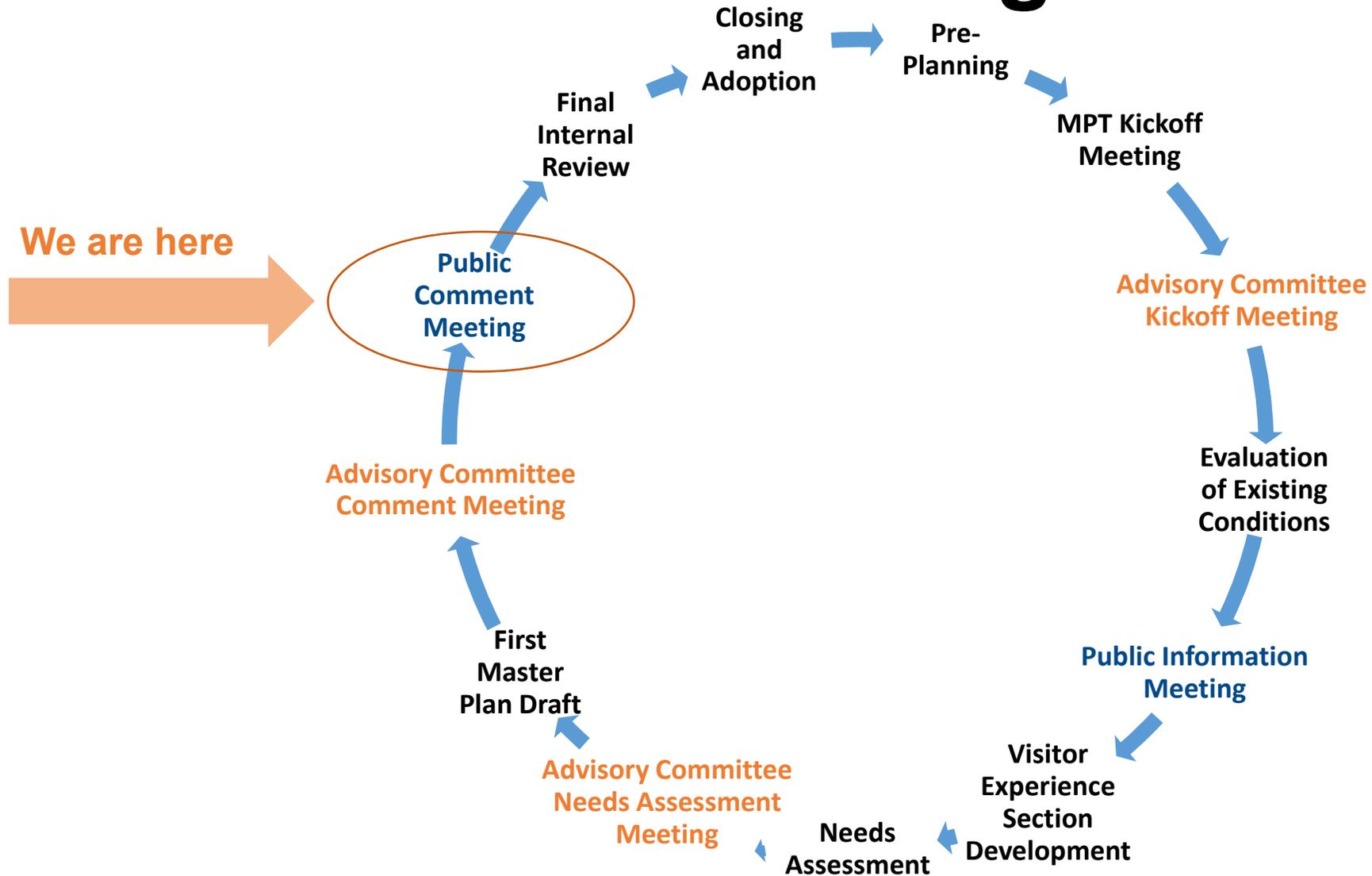
Master Plan Document

DRAFT MASTER PLAN

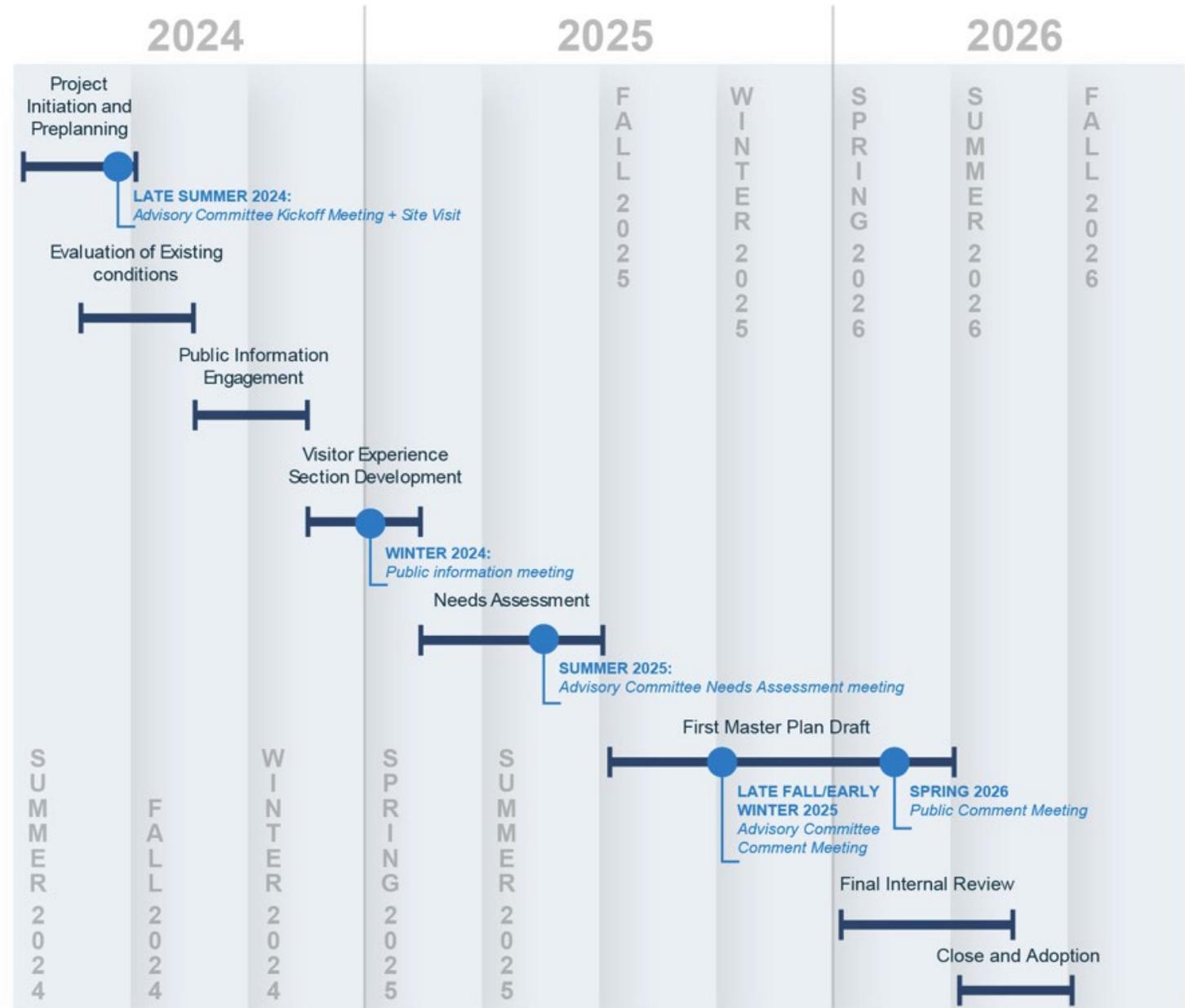
FINAL MASTER PLAN



Master Planning Process



Master Plan Schedule



Public Outreach & Engagement

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A Stratus Team Company

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 **DCR**
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation



Public Input

Input Sources

- **Public Information Meeting, 12/16/24**
64 members of the public, 3 media outlets
- **Online Public Survey, 12/16/25 – 1/19/25**
557 respondents
- **Online Advisory Committee Survey, 12/16/24 – 1/19/25**
6 respondents

Public Information Meeting

Input Summary

- No direct input was elicited
- Public provided some questions and comments during the Q&A:
 - Desire for park to be maintained at a high level
 - Coordinate with VDOT to ensure road capacity
 - Desire for strong connection with the NC state park – trails, design, river crossing
 - Provide a canoe/kayak put-in
 - No RVs
 - Be the first birding park in VA





Online Survey

- Purpose: to solicit public feedback on the vision and amenities for Mayo River State Park
- Same survey given to the public and the Advisory Committee
- DCR advertised the survey through press releases and on social media platforms
- Asked questions on:
 - Background
 - Park character
 - Recreation at the park
 - Community Integration
 - Goals and vision for the park
 - Open comment

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY RESULT HIGHLIGHTS

557 SURVEY RESPONSES

VA STATE PARKS SEE HIGH VISITATION

95%

of respondents visit at least once in the past year

85%

of respondents visit three or more times annually

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED THE DEFINING THEMES OF THE MAYO RIVER PARK



Scenic Views



Ecological Diversity



Rare Species Habitat



Indigenous Heritage of the Sappony and Monacan Peoples

TOP 10 FACILITIES THAT RESPONDENTS WANT TO SEE IN MAYO RIVER STATE PARK



Picnic Shelters



Picnicking Areas



Nature Center



Interpretive Programs, Signs, Trails



Water Access for Fishing



Camping - Tent



Developed Blueways or Water Trails



Visitors Center



Wildlife Watching



Hiking Trails

Survey Results Summary

Key Findings

- Facility Preferences:** The most desired facilities align with regional recreation needs, prioritizing hiking trails, tent camping, and water access for fishing.
- Regional Impact:** The most desired community benefits from Mayo River State Park include increased recreational opportunities for residents, higher visitation to the area, and integration with local schools.
- Primary Goals:** The top three priorities for the park are:
 1. Protect, conserve, and enhance the Mayo River and the park's natural and scenic resources.
 2. Provide a range of overnight and day-use recreational opportunities.
 3. Serve as a model of environmentally sensitive design.

What we heard



How it shaped the plan

1. Strong interest in river access and water-based recreation
2. Desire for strong physical connections to North Carolina's Mayo River State Park
3. Preference for low-impact recreation (hiking, tent camping); Concerns about RV's
4. Importance of protecting natural, scenic, and cultural resources; Interest in indigenous and early settlement history

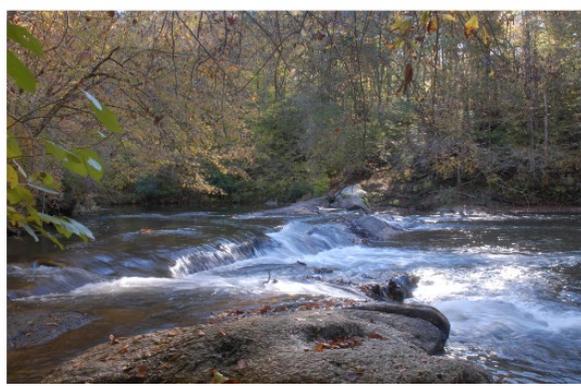
1. Canoe/kayak launch, ADA fishing access, and river-oriented day-use areas included in Phase 1
2. Phased pedestrian bridge and cross-border trail connections included in Phase 3
3. Focus on trails, cabins, and tent camping; No RV facilities included in the conceptual plan
4. Resource management goals prioritized; Protection and interpretation of Byrd's Ledge, indigenous sites, and historic landscapes

Park Background

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Park Background

Mayo River State Park

- Mayo River is named after the surveyor William Mayo, who was a member of William Byrd's team who surveyed the VA-NC border in the early 1700s.

- Byrd's journals describe the geological features of the park and rivers.
- Ned Bearskin, a Sappony guide and hunter, led William Byrd and his surveying team

- The land was the home of the Sappony Native American tribe, with village sites dating back to 1000-1450.

- Stone fishing weirs are still visible downstream of the park site in NC



Source Description:
(title page) *The Westover Manuscripts: Containing the History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina; A Journey to the Land of Eden, A. D. 1733; and A Progress to the Mines. Written from 1728 to 1736, and Now First Published*
(spine) *Westover Manuscripts*
William Byrd, of Westover
Edmund Ruffin
iv, 143 [1] p., ill.
PETERSBURG:
PRINTED BY EDMUND AND JULIAN C. RUFFIN.
1841.

Call number C 917 B99 c2 (North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

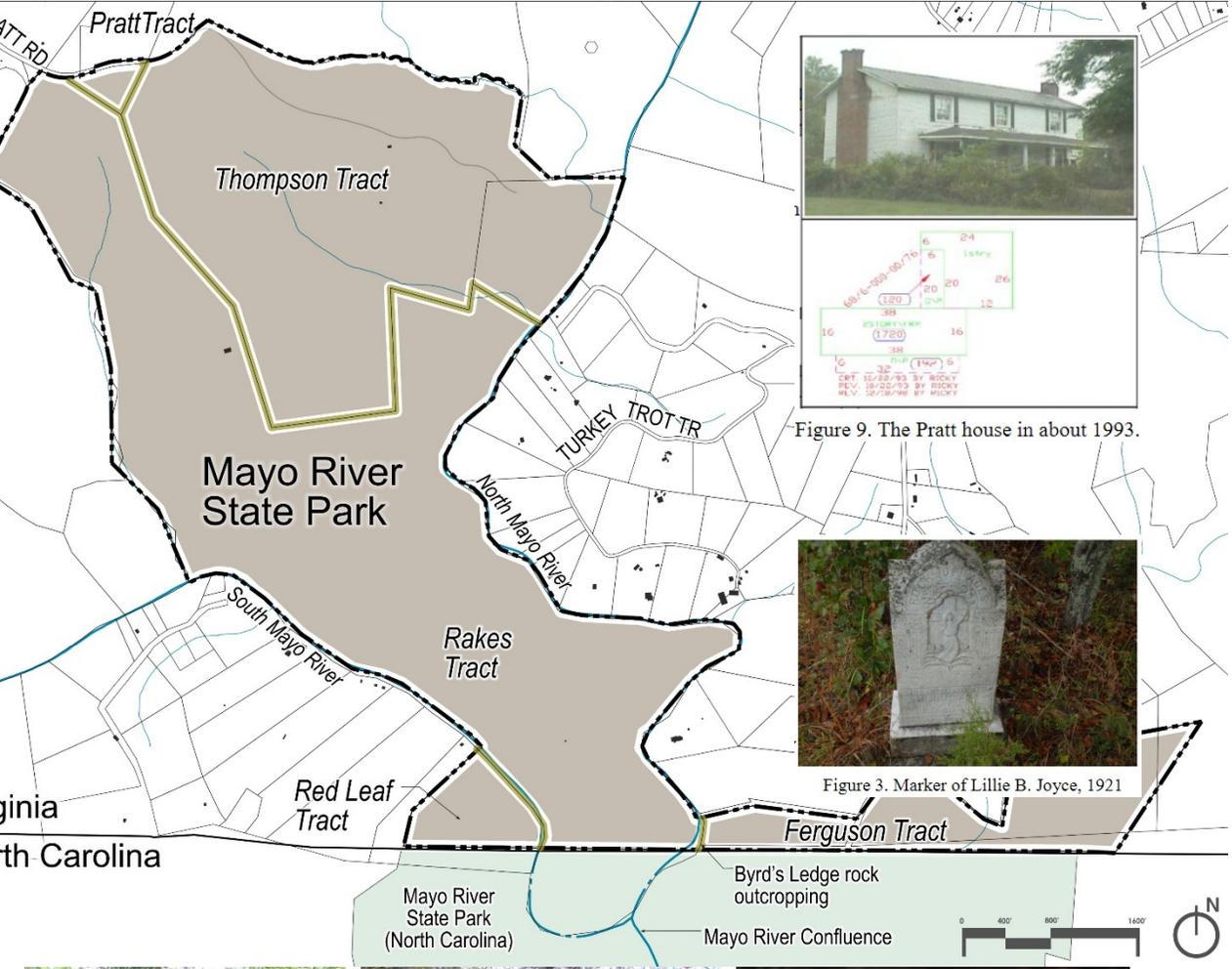


Figure 9. The Pratt house in about 1993.



Figure 3. Marker of Lillie B. Joyce, 1921

Park Background

Mayo River State Park

- The park site once had several residential properties and supporting agricultural out buildings, dating back to the 19th century
- Two cemeteries are located within the park
- Remnants of orchards and gardens

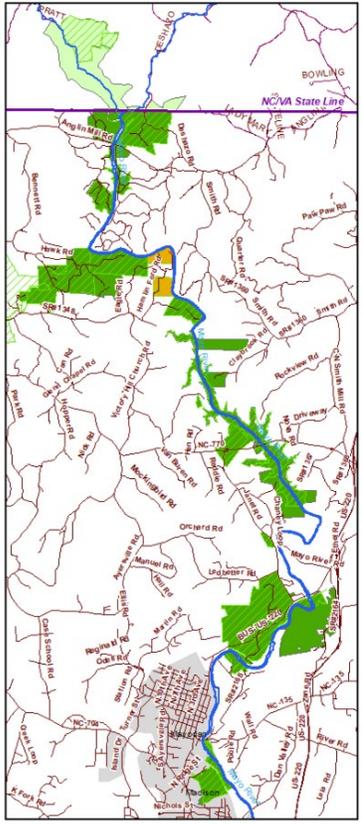
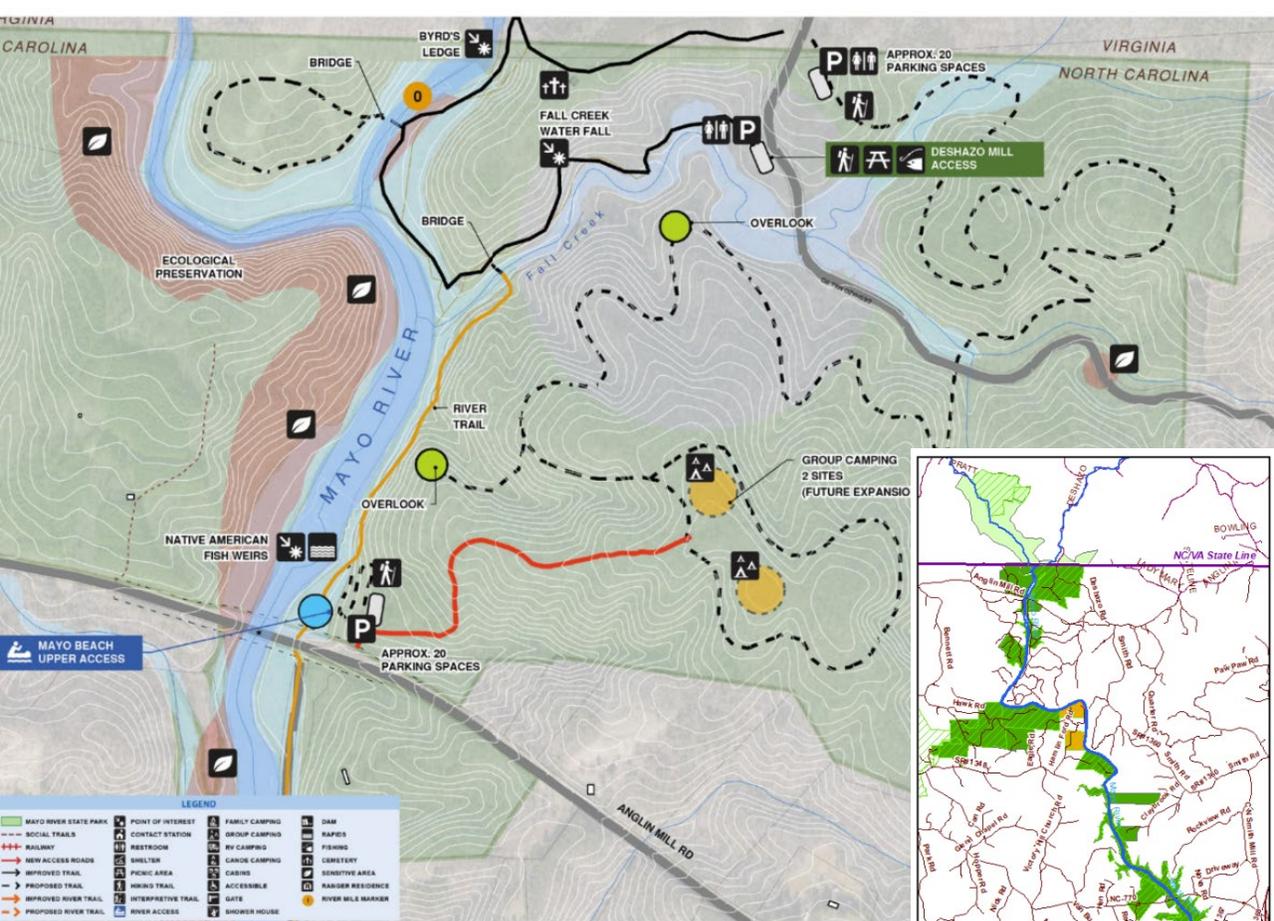


Figure 17. Log barn in 2019.



Figure 18. Log barn in 2023.





FALL CREEK WATERFALL

Park Background

North Carolina Mayo River State Park

- Opened in 2010
- Follows Mayo River 16 miles to confluence with Dan River
- Deshazo Mill access – trails and parking. Future plans for group tent camping and canoe/kayak access
- Fall Creek Waterfall

Visitor Experience

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Visitor Experience

Visitor Experience (VE) is a broad term encompassing the overall journey, activities and interactions of park users, as well as their personal, subjective feelings, impressions and level of satisfaction with the park

Master Planning looks at VE to understand:

- Audiences & User Groups
- User Group Wants, Needs, and Expectations
- Themes and Subthemes
- Park Purpose Statement
- Essential Experiences
- Experience Areas



Visitor Experience

Areas and Themes

- **Arrival Corridor:** The gateway to the park, featuring trailheads, signage, and future development of a standard entrance and entry road.
- **Day Use Areas:** Spaces for picnicking, gathering, and recreation, with future amenities such as a Visitor Center, classroom space, shelters, and paddle launches.
- **Waterfront Areas:** Access points for fishing, paddling, wading, and scenic river views, with interpretive signage and programming.
- **Passive Recreation and Habitat Management Zones:** Trail networks and habitat areas for hiking, wildlife observation, and interpretive experiences, especially near Byrd's Ledge.
- **Potential Capital Development Areas:** Future sites for campgrounds, cabins, and overnight accommodations, integrated with cultural resource remnants.
- **Special Management Areas:** Sensitive zones with limited access, managed for conservation rather than recreation.

Visitor Experience

Visitor Audience Types & Essential Visitor Experiences

- Active Recreators
- Cultural Special Interest Users
- Education Users
- Low Impact Recreation Users
- Natural Resource Special Interest Users
- Overnight Users
- Water Recreation Users



For Short Visits (1–2 hours):

- Experience Byrd's Ledge, walk the Interpretive Trail, visit the historic campsite, hear the story, and capture a photograph.
- Picnic along the designated Scenic River near the state line/confluence as a gateway to experiencing two states.
- Hike the Birding Loop.



For Half-Day Visits:

- Enjoy the future Visitor Center.
- Wade and fish along the river.
- Immerse in a hiking experience along a mountain stream.
- Try single-track mountain biking.
- Cross the future bridge and explore trails from state to state.



For Full-Day Visits:

- Engage in immersive experiences on topics such as historical agriculture and subsistence farming.
- Hike or drive to North Carolina to see Fall Creek Falls.
- Enjoy an all-day float, starting in Virginia and ending in North Carolina.



For Overnight Stays:

- Stargaze in designated viewing areas.
- Participate in group camping and campfire programs.
- Attend events in and out of the park.

Park Purpose Statement and Goals



Mayo River State Park Purpose Statement

Nestled between the North and South Forks of the Mayo, Mayo River State Park tells the story of Byrd's Ledge and the surrounding landscape, connecting history, nature, and the Virginia and North Carolina State Park systems.

Mayo River State Park Goals

1. Protect, conserve, and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the park.
2. Provide a variety of outdoor experiences that are compatible with resource protection and regional recreational trends.
3. Serve as a model for sustainable park development and environmental design.
4. Offer inclusive and accessible educational opportunities tied to the park's natural and cultural heritage.
5. Strengthen community connections and regional collaboration.

Conceptual Phased Development Plan

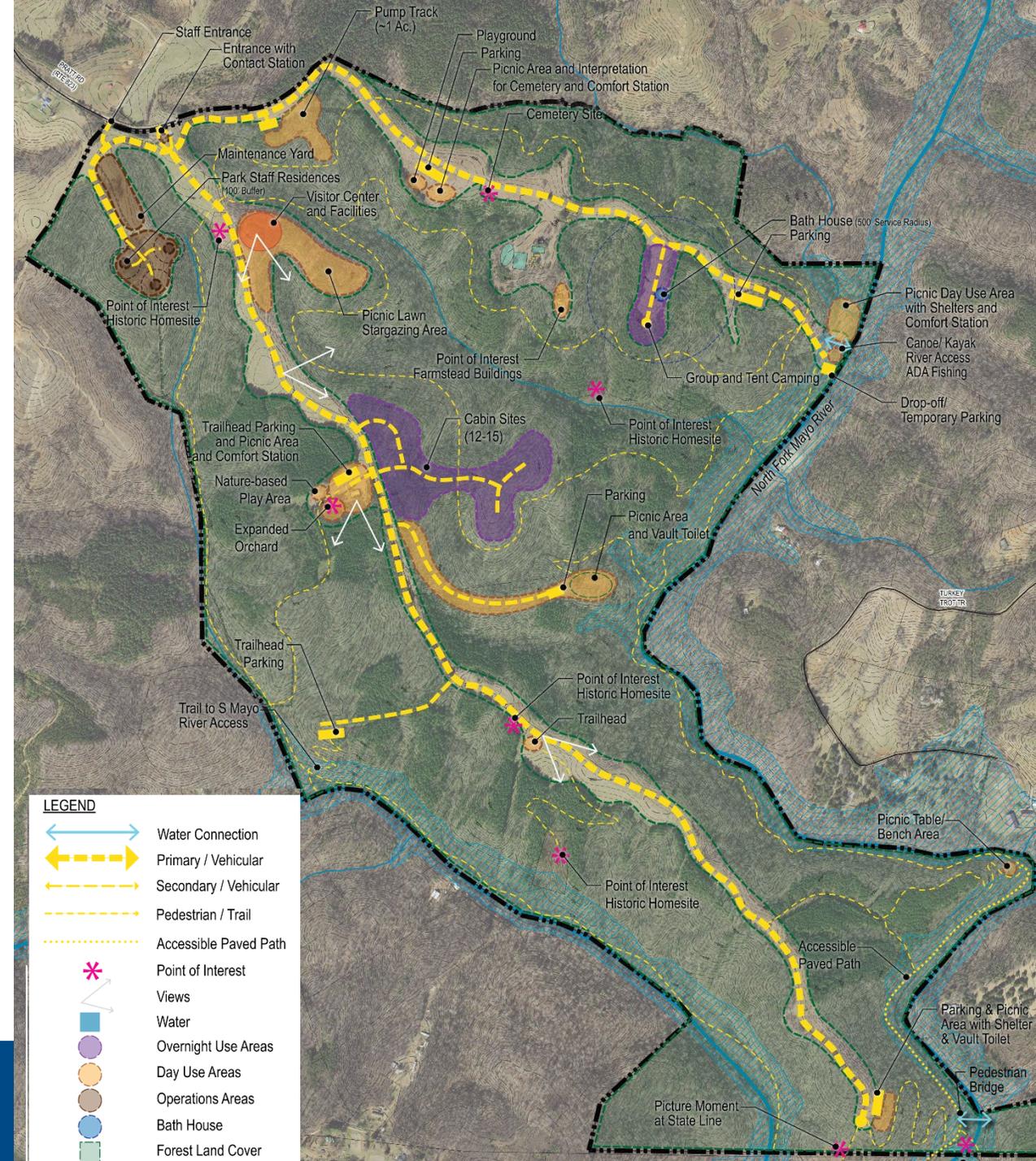
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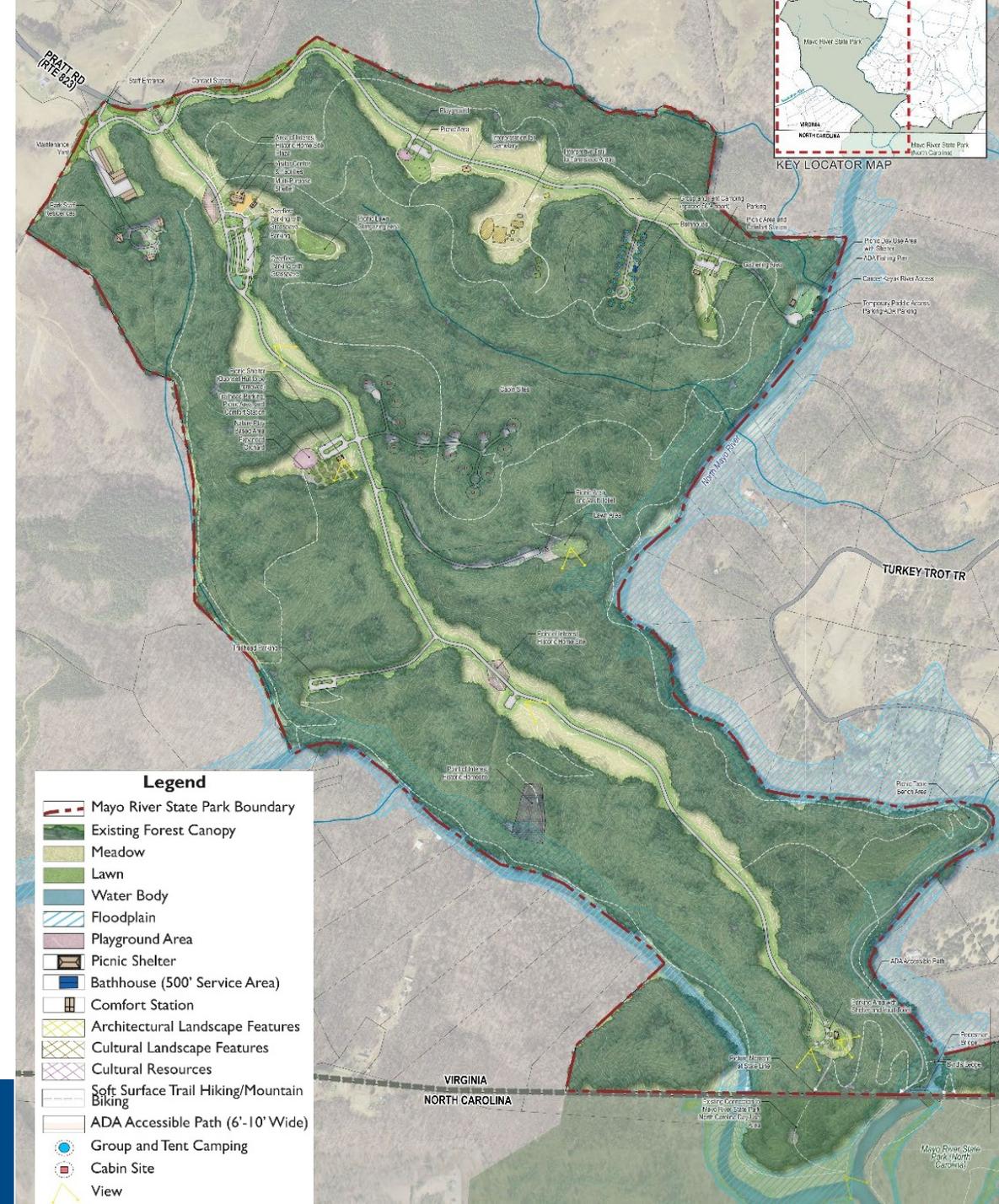
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Phased Concept Diagram

- Use areas categorized by type
- Symbolic “bubble diagram” style
- Purpose was to identify programming locations on the site



Rendered Conceptual Master Plan



Phase 1: Core infrastructure and day-use area development

Park Infrastructure

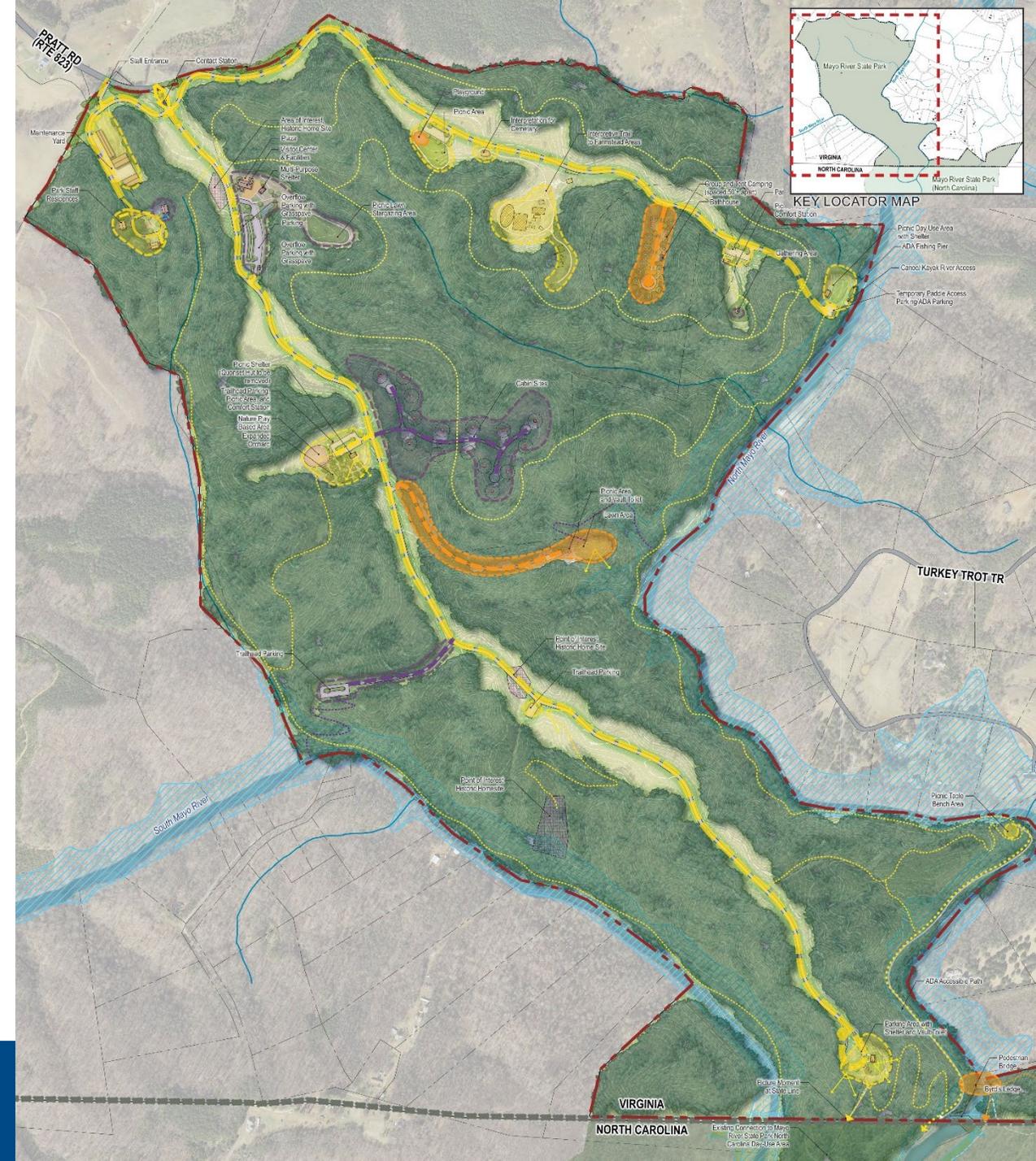
- Park Access Roads
- Utilities (Water, sewer/septic, electric, phone line, communication services, well/wellhouse)

Day-Use Area Facilities

- Picnic Areas (including Day Use Shelters)
- Restroom facilities at day use shelters (comfort stations, vault toilets)
- River Access Facilities
- ADA Fishing Access
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Trailheads and Trail Network
- Interpretive Historic Sites (Homesites, Farmstead, Cemetery)
- Byrd's Ledge Scenic Overlook
- Picture Moment at State Line
- Nature-Inspired Play Area

Operational and Support Facilities

- Maintenance Yard (maintenance building, office space, equipment storage building, additional material storage areas, fuel pump)
- (2) Ranger Residences
- Contact Station



Phase 2: Overnight accommodations and expanded day-use facilities

Overnight Accommodations

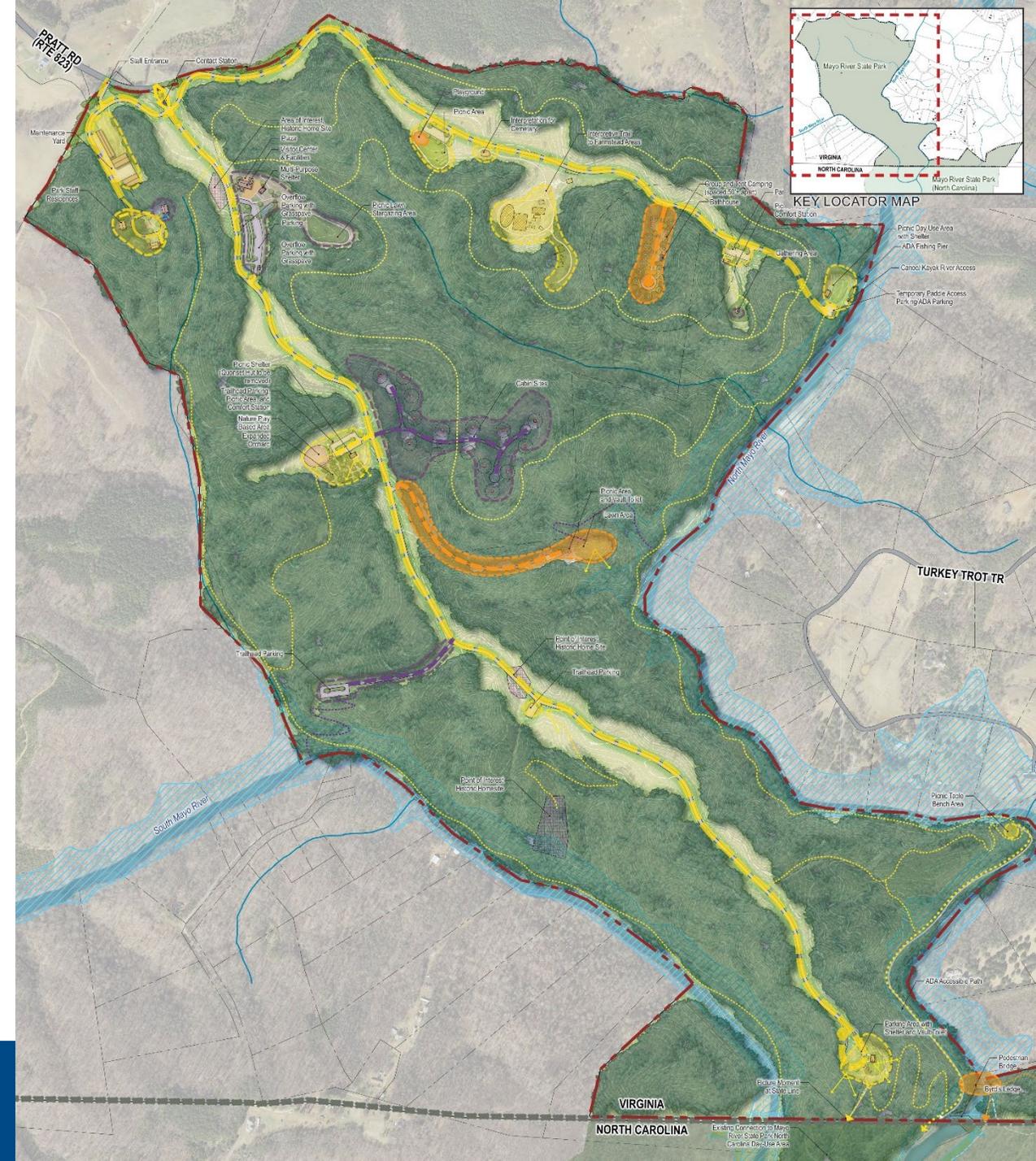
- (12-15) 1-2 Bedroom Cabin

Day-Use Area Facilities

- Visitor Center and Visitor Center day-use area and multi-purpose shelter
- Stargazing Area
- Gathering area near North Mayo River Access Parking
- South Mayo River ridgetop parking access.

Operational and Support Facilities

- Additional ranger residence



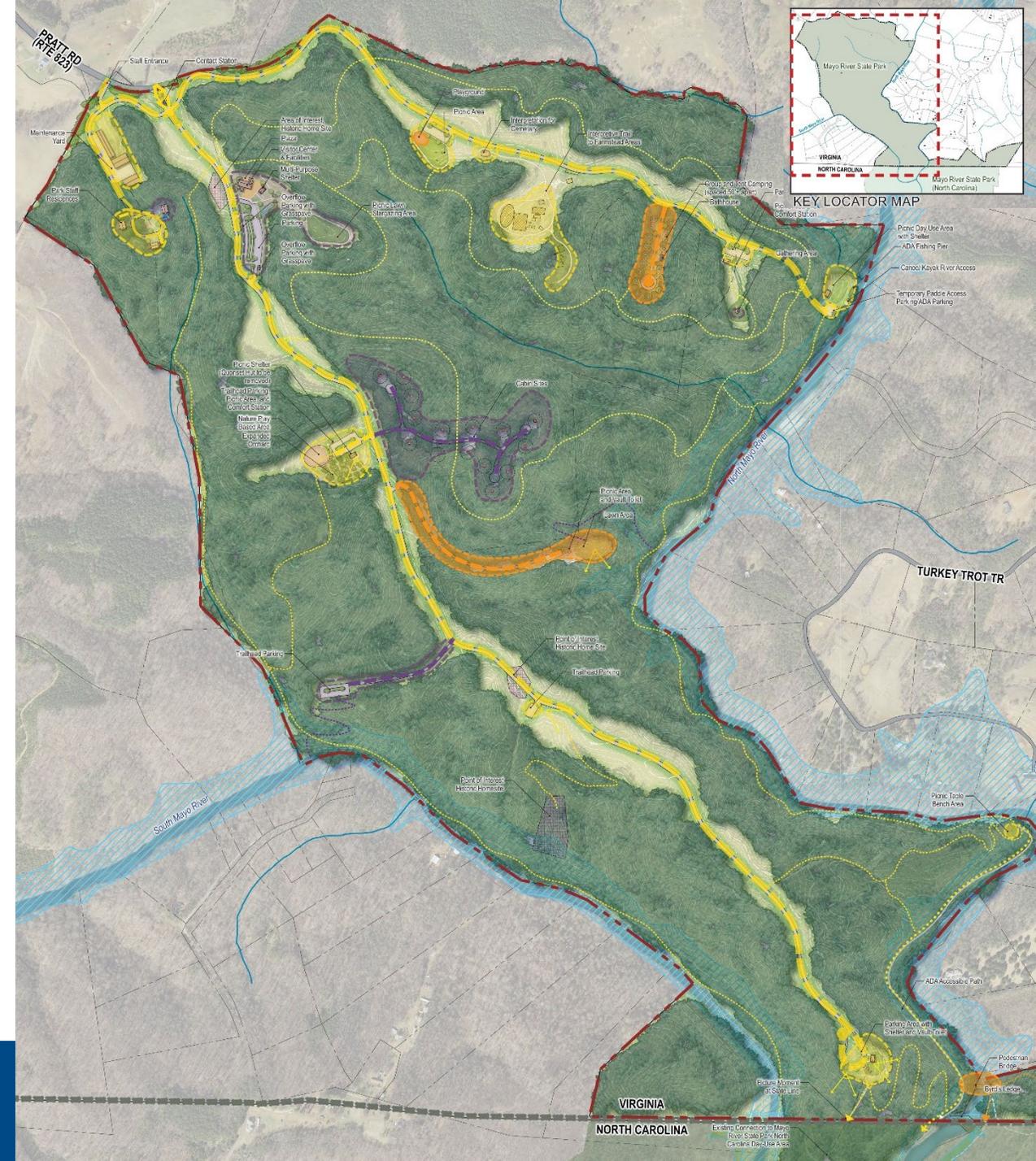
Phase 3: Pedestrian connection over the Mayo River to North Carolina

Overnight Accommodations

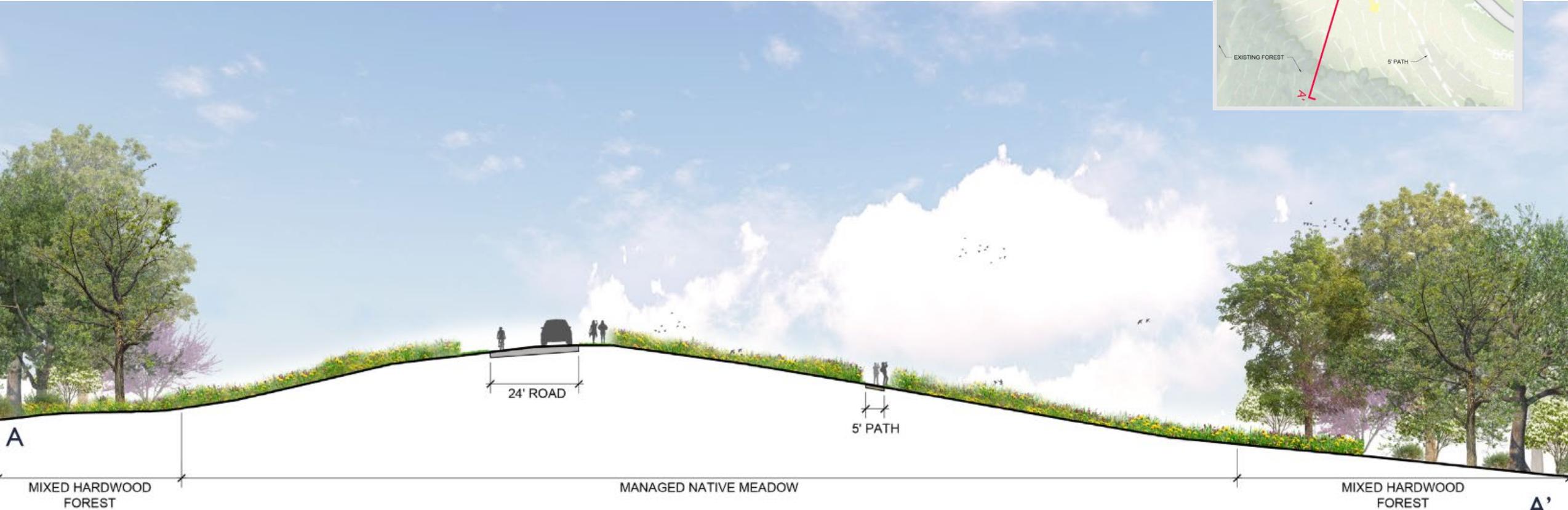
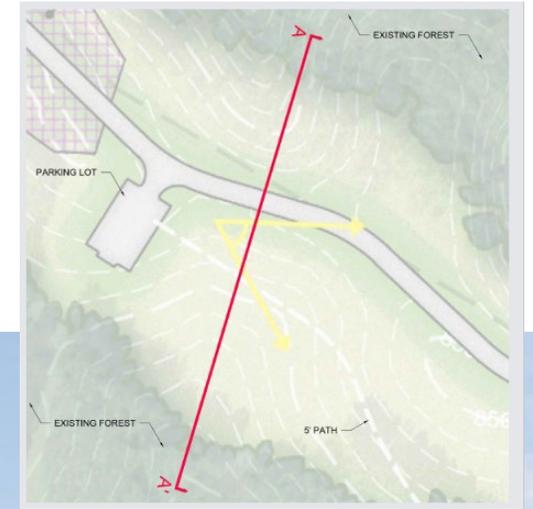
- Group/ tent camping (up to 16 sites)
- Bathhouse

Day-Use Area Facilities

- Picnic area and vault toilet
- Playground
- Pedestrian bridge over North Mayo River
- Trail connections to North Carolina Mayo River State Park

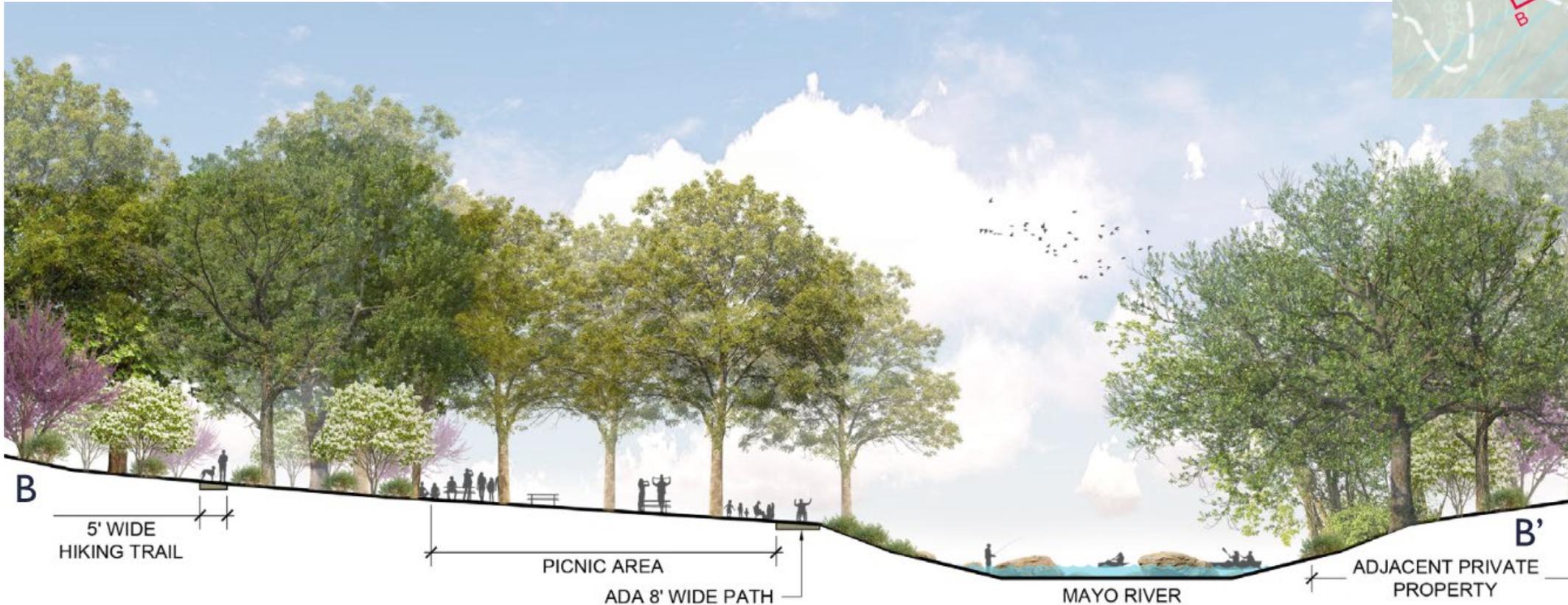
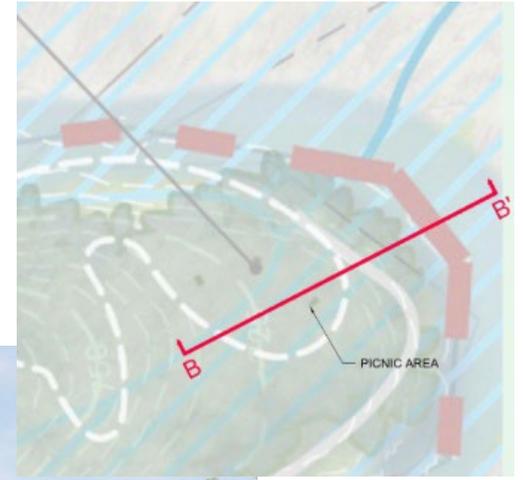


Illustrative conceptual renderings



Renderings are an artist's interpretation of the potential site development and do not represent the final design.

Illustrative conceptual renderings



Renderings are an artist's interpretation of the potential site development and do not represent the final design.

Next Steps





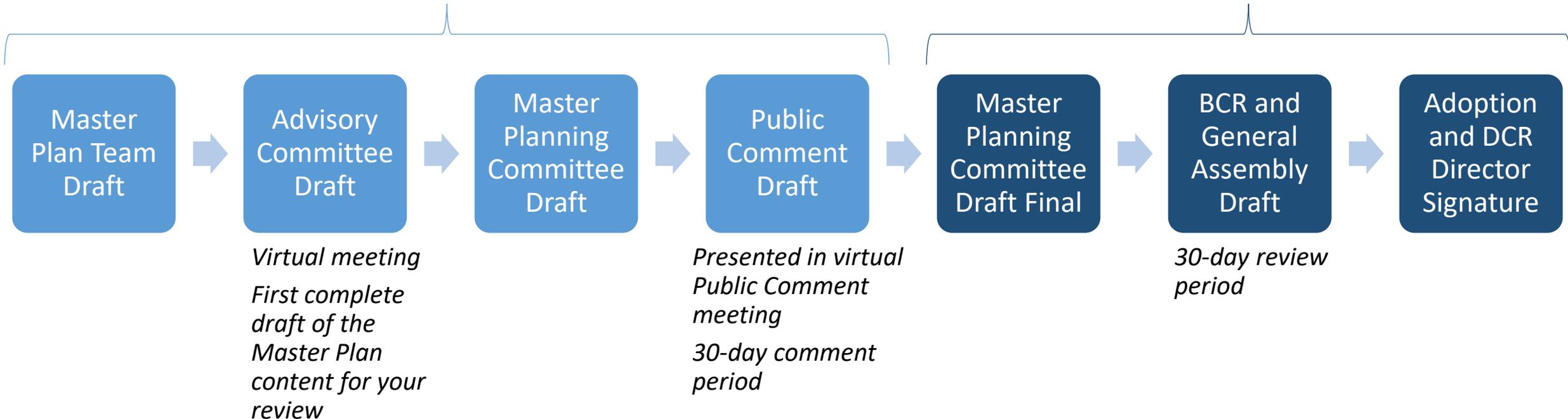
Next Steps

- DCR is reviewing the draft master plan report document.
- Please send your comments by email to PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov with “Mayo River State Park Master Plan” in the subject line.
- Comments will be accepted for 30 days after this meeting, and will close on April 12th, 2026.

Master Plan Document

DRAFT MASTER PLAN

FINAL MASTER PLAN



Thank you for attending!



If you have any questions or additional comments, please email
PlanningResources@dcr.virginia.gov

Visit the Mayo River Master Plan project website for all current public information
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/mr-masterplan>

Resource Management Goals

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Natural Resource Management Goals

- **Invasive Species Management: Actively manage invasive species throughout the park**, prioritizing woody invasives such as Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). Herbaceous species, including Sericea Lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*) and Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), should be addressed as resources allow. **All known locations of invasives should be documented and tracked in a live, working database to monitor progress over time.**
- **Rare Species and Ecosystem Protection: Protect and avoid disturbance to rare species** such as Bog Chickweed (*Stellaria alsine*) and Sweet Azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*), **as well as rare ecosystems** like the Northern Coastal Plain/Piedmont Oak-Beech/Heath Forest. **Implement strategies to sustain these resources for the long term.**
- **Grassland and Successional Habitat Management: Use mechanical and chemical means to manage open grass fields**, preventing woody encroachment from mid-successional pines and hardwoods, thereby maintaining early successional habitat for wildlife.
- **Forest Restoration: As resources allow, harvest existing successional pine stands and transition them to native Oak-Hickory ecosystems**, following DCR Natural Heritage's desired future conditions.
- **Comprehensive Trails Planning: Develop a comprehensive trails plan**, especially for the Rakes and Thompson Tracts, and **coordinate with North Carolina's Mayo River State Park** to provide cross-border trail connections.

Cultural Resource Management Goals

- **Byrd's Ledge Protection and Interpretation: Protect and interpret Byrd's Ledge and its viewshed**, using primary sources such as William Byrd's History of the Dividing Line and Secret History to tell the story of the crossing.
- **Indigenous Resource Assessment: Obtain expert assessment** of potential indigenous fish weirs and associated village sites along the Mayo River; **protect and interpret these resources** as part of the park's story.
- **Predictive Modeling: Utilize the predictive model** developed by the College of William & Mary (2024) **to guide future development and operations decisions.**
- **Cemetery Protection: Maintain and protect the marked cemetery on the Thompson Tract**, keeping it fenced and clear of vegetation. Avoid disturbance or development within at least 500 feet to safeguard potential unmarked graves.
- **Enslaved Cemetery Protection: Protect the potential enslaved cemetery on the Ferguson Tract**, maintaining a buffer of at least 500 feet. Keep the cemetery clear of debris and vegetation, and preserve ornamental plants historically associated with the site. Acquire adjacent land if available to provide additional protection.
- **Homestead and Orchard Documentation: Archaeologically test and document** the Thompson Tract's former homestead site, orchard, formal gardens, and outbuildings prior to any development. Consider preserving the orchard and interpreting the homestead through park programming.
- **Ruins Protection: Avoid disturbance to existing ruins**, including standing chimneys southeast of the Thompson Tract homestead, and ensure archaeological testing prior to any development.

Historical Resource Management Goals

- **Research, identify, document, and protect historical resources within Mayo River State Park, including sites, structures, and landscapes of historical significance.**
Conduct historical research and archaeological surveys to inform park development and interpretation. Collaborate with historians, archaeologists, and local communities to ensure that historical resources are preserved and appropriately interpreted for visitors.

Built/Physical Resource Management Goals

- **Ensure that all built and physical resources within Mayo River State Park**—including trails, buildings, infrastructure, and visitor amenities—**are designed, constructed, and maintained** to support park operations, visitor safety, accessibility, and resource protection. Incorporate sustainable design principles, regular maintenance schedules, and adaptive management strategies to preserve the integrity and functionality of physical assets.

Demographic and Market Analysis

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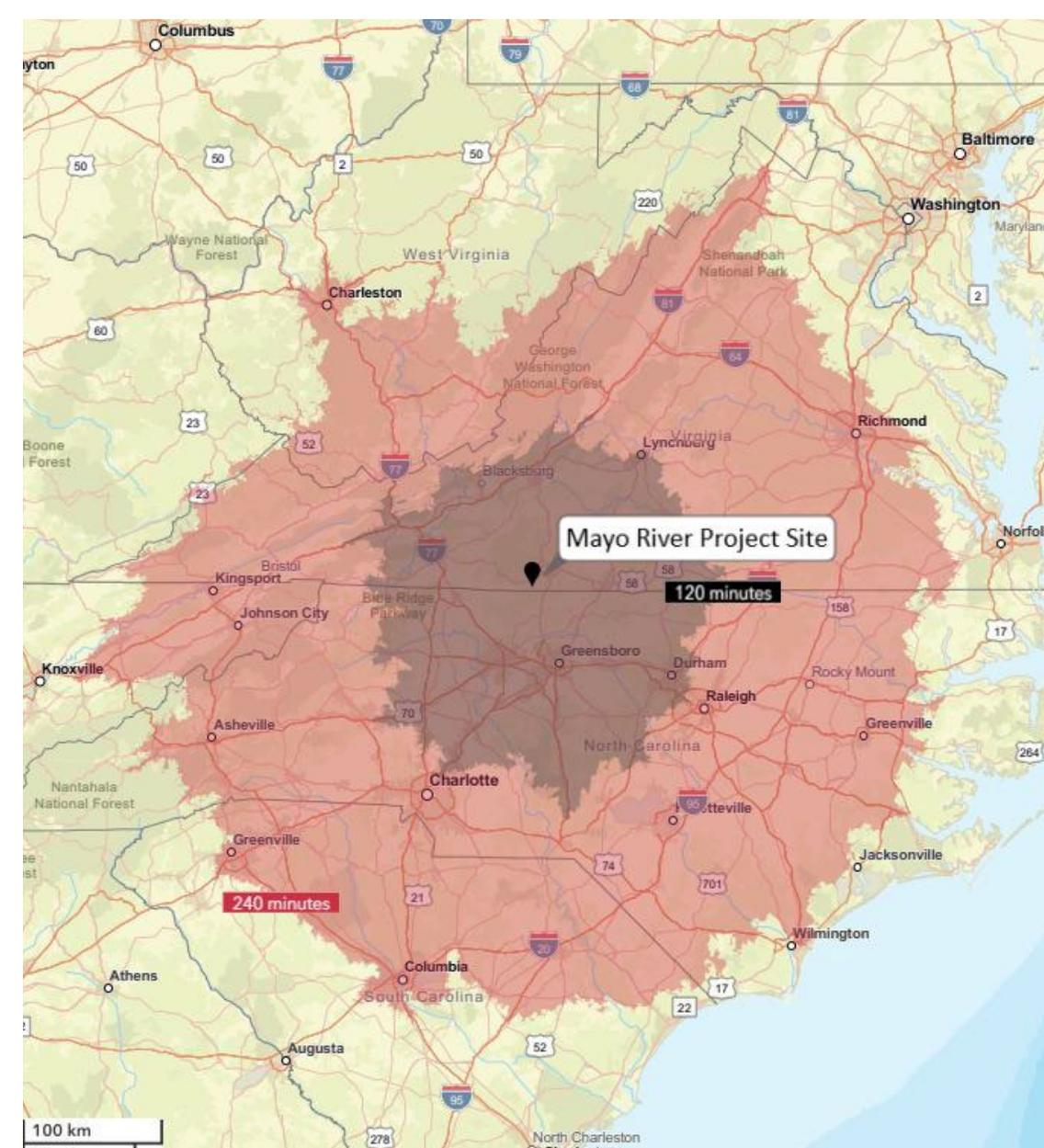
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Demographic and Market Analysis

Services Areas

- Primary Service Market = 2-hour drive time
- Secondary Service Market = 4-hour drive time



Demographic and Market Analysis

Service Areas

PRIMARY SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW 2024 ESTIMATES



2024 Total Population
4,128,257



2024 Total Households
1,683,459



2024 Median Age
40.4 years



2024 Median Household Income
\$65,837



2024 Race
64.9% White 19.1% Black Alone
3.6% Asian Alone
9.7% Hispanic Origin

Both are:
65% Urban
35% Rural

SECONDARY SERVICE AREA DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW 2024 ESTIMATES



2024 Total Population
17,497,294



2024 Total Households
7,036,049



2024 Median Age
40.1 years



2024 Median Household Income
\$65,583



2024 Race
63.3% White 20.6% Black Alone
3.3% Asian Alone
9.6% Hispanic Origin